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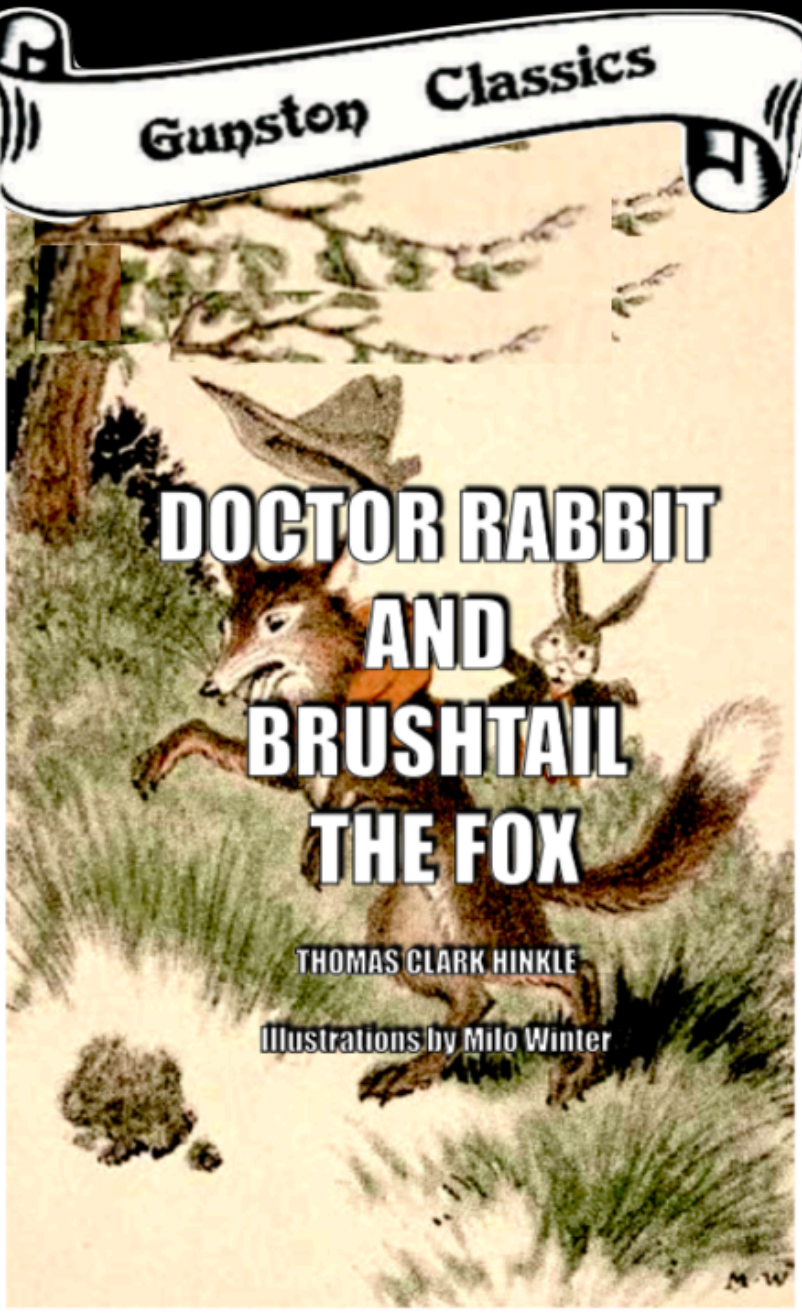

DOCTOR RABBIT AND BRUSHTAIL THE FOX

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Gunston & The Book Bunnies

The Gunston Trust

DOCTOR RABBIT AND BRUSHTAIL THE FOX

Second Edition

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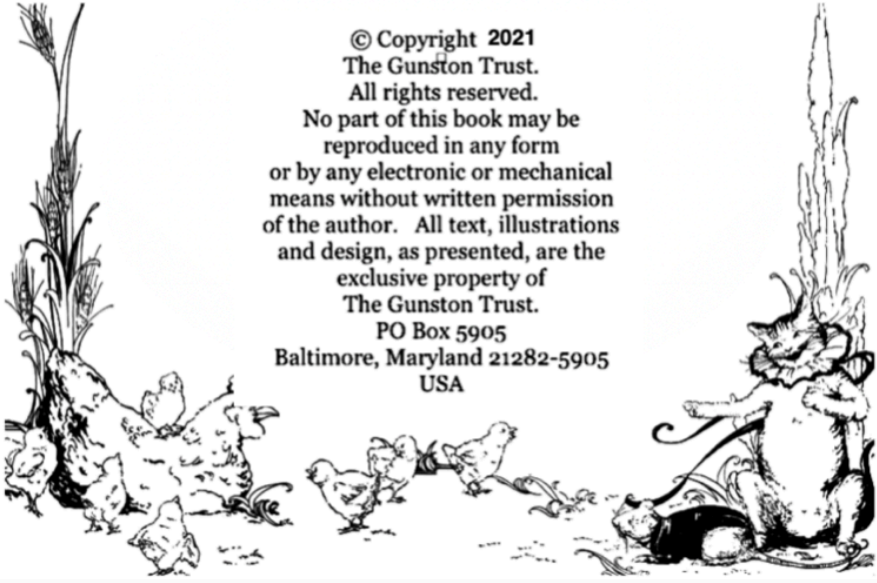

M·W.
"He's Brushtail the Fox,"
Doctor Rabbit said

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*MY! HOW HE DID JUMP AND YELL!

*BRUSHTAIL THE FOX SEIZED HER BY

THE NECK

*IT WAS A QUEER PROCESSION!

BRUSHTAIL THE FOX COMES TO THE BIG GREEN WOODS

Doctor Rabbit and Cheepy Chipmunk were sitting in Doctor Rabbit's front yard talking. They laughed a good deal as they talked, for it was a lovely morning in the beautiful Big Green Woods, and everyone felt happy.

Finally jolly Doctor Rabbit said he believed he would run over to the big sycamore tree to eat some more of the tender blue grass that grew there. It seemed as if he could eat there all day and all night, he said, because that grass was so good. Cheepy Chipmunk said he was getting hungry again too, and

he guessed he would be going home to eat the fresh ear of corn he had found that morning.

Cheepy Chipmunk got up and was starting away, when Doctor Rabbit seized him and said in a low, frightened whisper that scared Cheepy half to death, "Come back and sit down and keep as still as anything. Look out there, will you!"

Very badly startled, Cheepy Chipmunk came back and sat down, and his eyes followed Doctor Rabbit's eyes. Cheepy saw an animal such as he had never seen before. This animal looked somewhat like a dog, but Cheepy knew right away he was no dog. He was not quite so large as Ki-yi Coyote, and was of a reddish-brown color, with a large, bushy tail. The animal was walking along under the trees not far away, and did not even look in the direction of Doctor Rabbit and little Cheepy Chipmunk.

But, although he could not tell why, Cheepy knew at once that that reddish-brown animal walking along out there under the trees was very dangerous to chipmunks and rabbits and any number of other little

animals. Yes, sir, Cheepy Chipmunk was dreadfully frightened at once, for he was certain his life and the lives of Stubby Woodchuck, Chatty Red Squirrel and all his other friends were in great danger. But he had never seen such an animal before, so of course he did not know what it was.

While Doctor Rabbit and Cheepy Chipmunk looked, the strange animal walked along just as if he were not interested in anything. He did not even look toward Doctor Rabbit and Cheepy Chipmunk. This fooled innocent Cheepy, and he whispered to Doctor Rabbit,

"He has not seen us; let's slip into your house! I don't want him to catch sight of us."

"Keep right still!" Doctor Rabbit whispered in reply.

"Just sit still. Yes, he has seen us—don't you fool yourself about that. But he knows well enough he can't catch us now. He's made up his mind he'll wait until he gets a better chance. But we won't let him know we see him. We'll have to try to deceive him at

every turn. Yes, sir, Cheepy, we've got to watch out every minute now; we certainly have. He's one of the most cunning animals there is. I'm sorry he's come into our woods."

Cheepy Chipmunk was so frightened that his teeth were chattering as he asked, "Who is he?"

"He's Brushtail the Fox," Doctor Rabbit said. "I saw him a number of times in the woods up along the Deep River where I used to live. We'll see more of him —we can count on that. And now, Friend Cheepy, you must stay right here at my house until we are sure Brushtail has stopped watching us out of the corner of his eye."

CHATTY RED SQUIRREL IS HEARD SCOLDING LOUDLY

Doctor Rabbit was right. Brushtail the Fox had seen exactly who was in Doctor Rabbit's front yard, but he did not act as if he knew there was any one within a mile of him. No, he just kept right on walking slowly under the trees. And then all of a sudden Chatty Red Squirrel almost made him look up. Chatty was high up in a big hackberry tree, and from this safe perch he scolded Brushtail as loudly as he could.

"Get out of these woods!" Chatty Squirrel shouted angrily. "You have no right in here. You are just sneaking around trying to catch somebody. But you

can't. I won't let you. I'll tell on you. Look here, everybody. Here is old Brushtail the Fox. I know you, Mr. Brushtail. I've seen you before in the woods up along the Deep River. Look out, everybody! Brushtail is around. He's right under this tree, right this minute. I can see him. Look out for Mr. Brushtail! Here he is!"

Well, Doctor Rabbit and Cheepy Chipmunk watched and listened while Chatty Squirrel scolded Brushtail the Fox so loudly. But Brushtail paid no attention whatever to Chatty. The fact was that he did hear every word Chatty Squirrel said and he was pretty angry about it, too, because you see he did not want all the little creatures of the Big Green Woods to know he was around. He wanted to get one or two of them for breakfast before they even dreamed he was anywhere near.

But even if he was angry, Brushtail knew, of course, that he could not climb that tree after Chatty Squirrel, so he just ground his teeth and walked on. He decided that he would make Chatty pay for this, indeed he would. He would catch him the very first of all. And

so as Doctor Rabbit and Cheepy Chipmunk looked and listened, Brushtail, without saying a word, walked on and finally slipped out of sight among some leafy bushes.

"I'm going home this minute!" Cheepy Chipmunk exclaimed, his voice trembling with fear; and away he went for his stump as fast as he could run.

After Cheepy had gone, Doctor Rabbit said to himself, "Well, I do declare! So Brushtail the Fox has found the Big Green Woods, and likely enough intends to live here. If he does we'll certainly all have to watch out every minute. Indeed we will. I'm glad Chatty Squirrel is scolding so loudly. Perhaps our friends will all hear and be on the lookout."

Chatty Squirrel, who had followed along in the branches of the trees and kept sight of slinky Brushtail, was now heard quite a distance away, scolding louder than ever.

"I wonder what Chatty is scolding about out there now," Doctor Rabbit said. "It sounds as if he were still talking to Brushtail. Perhaps Brushtail has

stopped out there, and possibly he has caught something and is eating it. I'm going to slip out that way and see. I'll take the path that leads past several briar patches, and if Mr. Fox runs for me I'll just slip into a briar patch. If he tries to follow me in there he knows what he'll get. He'll get his eyes scratched out with the briars. My, how Chatty is scolding! He's scolding Brushtail, too. Brushtail must be doing something unusual or Chatty would not talk so excitedly."

BRUSHTAIL THE FOX PLAYS "POSSUM"

Doctor Rabbit hurried away from his home toward the place where he heard Chatty Squirrel scolding Brushtail the Fox. Doctor Rabbit, to tell the truth, was afraid to venture out there so close to Brushtail, but then, he reasoned, he would have to go sooner or later and get something to eat, so he might as well venture out now and see what the old villain was doing.

Doctor Rabbit kept in the path that led past several briar patches, and this made him feel pretty safe. The nearer Doctor Rabbit came to the place where Chatty Squirrel was scolding, the louder

sounded Chatty's angry voice. Doctor Rabbit crept close, and slipped into a briar patch. Not more than twenty feet away, lying on the ground as still as if he were dead, was Brushtail the Fox. But he did not fool Doctor Rabbit in the least. Doctor Rabbit knew instantly what Brushtail wanted: he wanted Chatty Squirrel.

Because Brushtail lay so still and paid not the least attention to his scolding, Chatty Squirrel became really puzzled. He stopped scolding and said to himself, "Now I wonder if that old scamp is dead. He certainly lies there very still, anyway. I believe I'll just slip down on the ground for a minute and see. If he's just playing dead, he'll come after me when I get on the ground. Then I'll know for sure, and I'll go back up the tree in a hurry."

Chatty Squirrel scrambled down the tree, and as soon as he reached the ground he began scolding Brushtail the Fox. He thought, of course, that this would make Brushtail jump up if he were only playing dead; but Brushtail paid no attention to Chatty. He lay

as still as a dead fox. Chatty Squirrel ran a little way toward him, but was afraid to venture far. Just then he happened to see Doctor Rabbit hiding under the briar patch, motioning for him to come over, and looking as though he knew something very funny.

There happened to be another tree by the briar patch, so Chatty Squirrel sprang right over to see what Doctor Rabbit wanted. Doctor Rabbit whispered something in Chatty's ear, and then they chuckled softly to themselves. The more Chatty thought about what Doctor Rabbit had said, the more he laughed—not very loudly, of course, because he did not want Brushtail the Fox to hear.

"Hurry along now before he gets up!" Doctor Rabbit whispered, and away ran Chatty Squirrel back to the tree he had left. Chatty scrambled back up the tree in a hurry, and began scolding Brushtail louder than ever. He did not say a word about Doctor Rabbit, of course; he just went right on scolding as if nothing had happened.

Now Brushtail the Fox was not dead, and as he lay there very still he thought every minute Chatty Squirrel's curiosity would get the better of him and Chatty would come down the tree and close enough so that he could pounce upon him. But Chatty did just exactly what Doctor Rabbit had told him to do.

"I wish," he said aloud, "that I knew whether Mr. Fox is really dead.

He lies so still I believe he is, and if he lies there much longer I shall have to go down and see. Yes, I'll have to go down and poke him and see!"

Brushtail the Fox could scarcely keep from smacking his lips when Chatty said this, but he did not move, of course. He lay perfectly still, not even winking an eye, for he was very hungry, and he hoped Chatty Squirrel would decide to hurry and come down.

And all the time that Chatty Squirrel up in the tree was scolding, Doctor Rabbit was working at something in the near-by thicket. Chatty, you see, was going to keep Brushtail's attention until Doctor Rabbit played a good joke on old Brushtail.

BRUSHTAIL GETS A SCARE

Now, this was what Doctor Rabbit was doing in the near-by thicket. He gathered some moss, and rolled it into a big ball. Then he took a bottle of medicine from his medicine case. The bottle had ammonia in it—spirits of ammonia, it was—and Doctor Rabbit poured the medicine all over and through the big ball of moss.

My, but that ammonia smelled strong! I should say it did smell strong. It was so strong, in fact, that Doctor Rabbit had to turn his head partly away from the moss while he poured the medicine on it. Now Doctor Rabbit had to be very, very careful. He picked up the ball of moss in his front paws and walked

toward Brushtail the Fox, who lay on the ground with his eyes shut tight.

Chatty Squirrel kept up a very loud scolding as Doctor Rabbit slipped up to Brushtail. Then when he was very near, Doctor Rabbit threw that moss with all the terribly strong ammonia right on Brushtail's head and over his nose. Brushtail got such a big whiff of the medicine that he almost strangled. My, how he did jump and yell! He was terribly scared, because he did not know for a minute what had happened.

Then he heard Chatty up on the limb laughing and shouting for joy. Doctor Rabbit ran back to the edge of the thicket, and he was laughing too. It certainly did look funny to see Brushtail the Fox standing and staring at that moss as if he thought it was something alive.

When Brushtail saw that a joke had been played on him he was terribly angry. He knew, of course, he could not get Chatty, so he made a rush for Doctor Rabbit.

My! How he did jump and yell!

But Doctor Rabbit skipped into the thicket, picked up his medicine case and shouted, "Good day, Mr. Fox! I guess you won't have Chatty for breakfast! You'd better eat the moss ball."

And away Doctor Rabbit ran. In a twinkling he was out of sight in the leafy woods.

Brushtail the Fox ran after Doctor Rabbit as fast as he could go, but it was no use. He could not find him. Now it happened that Doctor Rabbit had not gone far at all. He was not far from home, so he just hid behind a big log. And he was watching Brushtail the Fox all the time.

After a time Brushtail sat down and kept still. His sharp eyes, however, were looking in every direction. He thought he might see Doctor Rabbit by keeping quiet and looking about him.

Doctor Rabbit, as I have said, was so close to his home that he knew he was safe, so he walked quietly from behind the log, holding his medicine case and acting just as though he did not know that Brushtail the Fox was anywhere about.

Brushtail quickly lay down and was as quiet as possible.

Then Doctor Rabbit stopped, looked back, and said pleasantly, "It's a nice morning, Brushy."

That surely surprised Brushtail, but when he saw Doctor Rabbit's home tree not far away, he knew he could not catch him. So he smiled and said,

"I've just been playing with you all the time. Do come on over to my home, Neighbor Rabbit. I have something very fine there to show you. We'll have some good times together."

"Ha! ha! ha!" wise Doctor Rabbit laughed, as he started toward his big tree. "Yes," he continued, "I suppose you have some very cruel teeth to show me, Mr. Brushtail, but I can see them quite as well as I care to. Ha! ha! ha!" And Doctor Rabbit ran for his tree.

Brushtail ran after him, too, but Doctor Rabbit ran fast and reached his home in safety. There he peeked out and saw Brushtail steal into some bushes.

DOCTOR RABBIT SEES SOMETHING INTERESTING

Now when Doctor Rabbit ran into the big hollow tree that was his home, Brushtail the Fox slunk into some leafy bushes near by, and lay down without making a sound.

"I'll just wait here," Brushtail whispered to himself, "and that smart old rabbit will be coming out pretty soon. He won't know that I'm anywhere about." But old Brushtail was very much mistaken, for Doctor Rabbit had peeked out of his front door just as soon as he was inside his house, and you remember he saw Brushtail steal into the bushes. No, sir, he wasn't to be fooled this time. For a long time Brushtail lay in the

bushes. He lay so quietly that not a leaf on the branches about him stirred. His glittering eyes were turned toward Doctor Rabbit's tree, and every little while he showed his long, sharp teeth as he smiled at the thought of the good meal that big fat rabbit would make.

But all the while Doctor Rabbit watched from an upstairs window where Brushtail could not see him, although Doctor Rabbit could plainly see the pointed nose and sharp, gleaming eyes of his enemy.

Presently Doctor Rabbit heard the rustle of leaves and the gay chatter, chatter, chatter of Chatty Red Squirrel as he bounded into the branches of a tree overlooking the bushes that hid Brushtail.

Doctor Rabbit drew a long breath of relief. He wasn't afraid of Brushtail the Fox when he was safe in his big hollow tree—oh no, you mustn't think that, not for a moment. But you see Doctor Rabbit was getting pretty tired and stiff from watching so cautiously from his upstairs window, and yet he couldn't quite bring

himself to the point of going downstairs and forgetting Brushtail. No indeed, he couldn't quite do that.

So Doctor Rabbit was glad to see Chatty Red Squirrel, for he knew just what would happen. And sure enough, in a few minutes Chatty Squirrel saw Brushtail lying low in the bushes, and then how he did scold!

"Aha, old Brushtail, I see you hiding in the bushes. Thought I wouldn't see you, didn't you? Thought I wouldn't see you! But I see you, all right. You can't fool Chatty, no siree. Oh, I know you're looking for Doctor Rabbit," and Chatty's tone became angrier at the thought of Brushtail waiting to pounce upon his good friend, Doctor Rabbit. "You're just waiting for Doctor Rabbit to come home and then spring out at him. Get out of here, get out, get out of here!" screamed Chatty.

Brushtail the Fox was angry. Well, I should say he was. He knew that Doctor Rabbit would hear Chatty Red Squirrel's scolding, and would know that he was hiding ready to eat him if he came out of the tree. Brushtail was so angry that he snarled. But he

slunk away through the bushes without saying a word to Chatty Red. Brushtail is wise enough to know that there is no use arguing with Chatty Squirrel, for Chatty is altogether too noisy a talker. I should say he is.

When Brushtail slunk away through the bushes, Doctor Rabbit called to Chatty Red Squirrel, but Chatty did not hear him. He had scampered away to another tree, still talking loudly.

Then Doctor Rabbit turned quickly and leaned out of his window to watch Brushtail the Fox. Brushtail was trotting off through the Big Green Woods in a direction in which Doctor Rabbit seldom went. And Doctor Rabbit noticed that he seemed to be afraid someone would see him. He looked on each side of him as he went along, and every now and then he took a big jump sidewise. Doctor Rabbit was certainly interested now, for he believed Brushtail the Fox was going to hide somewhere. Probably he was going to hide in a place where he hid every day.

Yes, sir, Brushtail certainly was cautious now, and he must have jumped to one side as many as five

times while Doctor Rabbit was watching him. Then in a little while he reached a part of the woods where the brush and leaves were so thick that Doctor Rabbit could just barely see him as he slipped along.

TWO HUNTERS COME TO THE BIG GREEN WOODS

When Brushtail the Fox slipped into the place where there were so many leafy bushes, it was very hard for Doctor Rabbit to see him from his big tree. Sometimes he lost sight of Brushtail altogether, and then for an instant he would see his long, sharp nose, or his reddish-brown coat, or his big bushy tail. And all the time Brushtail became more and more cautious. He moved so slowly and so quietly among the bushes that Doctor Rabbit had to strain his eyes to see him. Then suddenly Brushtail jumped high up onto the dead limb of a big fallen tree. He walked out on this limb, then jumped far out into a dense thicket and disappeared.

Yes, sir, Brushtail the Fox was gone! Doctor Rabbit stood by his window in the tree and looked and looked. He thought he would presently see a sharp nose or a bushy tail, but he did not. Brushtail was hiding somewhere in that thicket.

"Well! well! well!" Doctor Rabbit exclaimed. "I certainly should like to know what old Brushtail is doing in there. I am positive he is in that thicket. He never could have slipped out without my seeing him. Yes, sir, he's in there. And that's probably where he always hides. Likely enough he has a den in there. I shouldn't be surprised if there are a lot of rocks in there and Brushtail the Fox has a big hole away back under them."

"Well," Doctor Rabbit continued, talking softly to himself, "I'm going to slip out there as near as possible and keep watch and see if I can discover anything more about Brushtail. I must not tell anyone as yet what I have seen. No, if I want to get a lot of information I must just keep still and do the finding out myself. It isn't safe to trust too many people."

Doctor Rabbit ran downstairs and was starting out into the woods to try to get nearer Brushtail's hiding place when he saw something that made him keep still and watch. Farmer Roe and his boy were coming through the woods toward Doctor Rabbit's tree. Just as they went past, Doctor Rabbit heard Farmer Roe say, "Yes, I'm certain that there is a fox in these woods. That was a fox's track we saw in the yard this morning, and that was a fox, I am sure, that took the old white hen last night. Our chickens will be in danger until we get rid of him."

"Do you suppose he hides in these woods in the daytime?" asked Farmer Roe's boy.

"I shouldn't be surprised," replied Farmer Roe. "In fact, I'm pretty sure he hides close by. There is one thing that puzzles me, however, and that is that although Yappy trailed that fox directly from the chicken yard, he lost the trail right in the woods and could not pick it up again. The fox has played some trick, of course," said Farmer Roe, "and we must try and find out what it is. I really shouldn't be surprised,"

he went on, "if that fox is lying around close enough to see us this minute. We'll just keep watch until we discover his hiding place."

DOCTOR RABBIT INFORMS HIS FRIENDS

Doctor Rabbit did not find out anything more about Brushtail the Fox that day, nor for several days. But it was only a very short time until all the little creatures of the Big Green Woods knew that Brushtail the Fox was around, and they were afraid to poke their noses out of their homes.

Stubby Woodchuck had seen Brushtail three times, and he said Brushtail certainly did look fierce.

"He looked so fierce he took my appetite away for several hours each time I saw him," said Stubby Woodchuck, "and I am sure he looks fully as terrible as Ki-yi Coyote or Tom Wildcat. Yes, sir, we have a very

"Sh!" Doctor Rabbit warned his friends. "Don't talk so loud!"

mean and dangerous enemy in Mr. Brushtail, and we must keep watch every minute."

"I wish he'd go away and stay away," said Cheepy Chipmunk, who was always easily frightened.

"But he doesn't expect to leave at all," Doctor Rabbit informed his friends. "He expects to live here in these woods, right along."

"He does!" exclaimed poor Cheepy Chipmunk, his voice trembling with fear. "How do you know he expects to live here?"

"Well," explained Doctor Rabbit, "I have seen quite enough to convince me that Brushtail expects to make his home in the Big Green Woods. In fact, I am in position to know that he has a home here right now. It's all fixed up, and he's living in it. He spends his time there except when he's out hunting us or after one of Farmer Roe's nice fat hens."

"Where is old Brushtail's home?" Stubby Woodchuck and Cheepy Chipmunk demanded in the same breath.

"Sh!" Doctor Rabbit warned his friends. "Don't talk so loud! Brushtail might be hiding so near he could hear every word you say. The fact is, I can't tell you any more at present. It would not help if I told you more, and it might get out so Brushtail would hear of it. Just keep still about what I've said and watch for Brushtail every minute you are out in the woods. In the meantime whenever I get a chance I will hide in a certain place, where I can see him often enough, I think, to discover what his plans are. Then when I find out all I can, I will slip around quietly and tell you."

"I saw Farmer Roe and his boy passing through our woods this morning," Stubby Woodchuck said. "I wonder what they were after?"

"They were after Brushtail," Doctor Rabbit explained. "I heard them talking and I heard them say they were trying to find out where he lives."

"Dear me! I hope they'll run him away so he'll never come back!" said Cheepy Chipmunk, with a troubled look.

"They'll probably have to find out first where he lives," said Doctor Rabbit, "and I believe that is going to be pretty hard for them to do. But still, Yappy has a very sharp nose, and in time he may find Brushtail's den."

It was dinner time, so Doctor Rabbit and Stubby Woodchuck and Cheepy Chipmunk separated, each slipping home as quietly as he could.

Doctor Rabbit did not see Brushtail the Fox again for several days. Then one morning when the sun came up warm and bright and all the little creatures of the Big Green Woods were feeling very happy, Doctor Rabbit decided that he would try again. He made up his mind to slip over to that thicket where he had last seen Brushtail, and see what he could discover with his sharp eyes.

There were a good many briar patches along the way, and Doctor Rabbit kept as near these as possible, so he was safe, even though the way was a little longer. You can be very sure, too, that Doctor Rabbit kept his eyes wide open all the time. But he did

not see the least sign of Brushtail the Fox, and decided that he was probably somewhere in that dense thicket. "Perhaps," thought Doctor Rabbit, "old Brushtail is in there right now eating a chicken he has stolen from Farmer Roe."

Now the very thought of getting any nearer that thicket made Doctor Rabbit tremble with fear. Still, there was a fine big briar patch close to the thicket, and Doctor Rabbit decided he would run for this. He had hidden in that briar patch several times from various enemies, and was familiar with every inch of it. He knew he would be safe from Brushtail in the briar patch, and all Brushtail could do if he saw Doctor Rabbit hiding there would be just to wait outside. But he would have to give up in the end, because Doctor Rabbit never would come out of a briar patch so long as an enemy was waiting for him.

Doctor Rabbit got all ready, and then he ran for that briar patch. He ran as hard as he could and dived into the briar patch just as if Brushtail were very close behind him, because, you see, it might be that Brushtail

was very close. Then Doctor Rabbit crept to the center of the briar patch and sat down. He decided that if necessary he would stay in the briar patch all day and watch. He knew Brushtail the Fox had some kind of a secret in that thicket—a den or something—else he never would have been so careful about getting into it.

Doctor Rabbit waited for about two hours, and he was already getting tired when all of a sudden he sat as still as a stone. In fact, he sat so perfectly still that I doubt if you could have seen him even if you had been looking right at him.

The reason why Doctor Rabbit sat still so quickly was that he saw a movement in the leafy thicket. Presently the bushes parted, and who do you suppose came out? No, it was not Brushtail—it was Mrs. Brushtail! And now Doctor Rabbit knew exactly why Brushtail had been so careful about getting into that thicket. It was Mr. and Mrs. Brushtail's home. And it was here, of course, that Farmer Roe's hens were disappearing, and this was where Doctor Rabbit and

Stubby Woodchuck and all their friends would go if they didn't watch out! Yes, sir! This was where a great many of the little creatures of the Big Green Woods would disappear if Mr. and Mrs. Brushtail did not leave. While Doctor Rabbit was looking at Mrs. Brushtail she yawned, showing all of her long, sharp teeth. Although he was safe in the briar patch, Doctor Rabbit trembled. He was a little too close to old Mrs. Brushtail to feel quite comfortable.

MRS. BRUSHTAIL GETS A HEN

Of course Doctor Rabbit was greatly surprised to see Mrs. Brushtail in the thicket. And still, after he thought about it, he was not so surprised either. You see, it was spring and just the time of year for Mr. and Mrs. Brushtail to find themselves a new home if they needed one.

Mrs. Brushtail stood there looking about in every direction with her sharp eyes. Then she gave a great spring and landed on the limb of the fallen tree. She walked along the limb until she came to the end of it, and then jumped, as Brushtail had done, as far out as she could, only Mrs. Brushtail did not jump toward the thicket, she jumped away from it. She stood again

looking all around and listening for a minute, then trotted away through the woods toward Farmer Roe's, and was soon out of sight.

Doctor Rabbit thought to himself, "Mrs. Brushtail is going over to the edge of the woods nearest to Farmer Roe's. She's going to hide there and see if some foolish hen doesn't come out into the woods to hunt bugs and grasshoppers."

And he made up his mind that as long as he was safe he would just wait where he was and see if Mrs. Brushtail would come back.

Well, he did not have to wait very long. As he sat in the briar patch listening, he heard a terrible cackling over toward the edge of the woods nearest Farmer Roe's. It sounded as if chickens were very much frightened and were running in every direction. In a short time Doctor Rabbit saw Mrs. Brushtail coming through the woods. And sure enough, she had one of Farmer Roe's big white hens in her mouth.

Mrs. Brushtail held the hen by the neck, and after making a wide circle and jumping to one side as

far as she could she came to the fallen tree. When she looked up at the high limb she seemed puzzled. You see, she could not jump so high with the hen. But she was pretty wise. She laid the hen upon the trunk of the tree, then jumped upon the limb above, and reaching down, picked up the hen and walked out along the limb toward the leafy thicket. Then she sprang into the thicket and disappeared.

How Doctor Rabbit did want to see the inside of that thicket! And what made him all the more curious was that he was certain he heard a number of growls after Mrs. Brushtail disappeared in there. And the growls did not sound like Mrs. Brushtail's voice, or like Brushtail's either.

Yes, sir, there was something very interesting going on in that thicket, and Doctor Rabbit made up his mind he must see what it was, if possible. He wondered where Brushtail was. Doctor Rabbit disliked to go any nearer the thicket unless he knew where that sly old fox was.

"But," he said to himself, "likely enough Mr. Brushtail is in the thicket with Mrs. Brushtail and is helping her eat that chicken. Anyway, it's only a little distance to that tree with a hole in the base and a lot of prickly vines around it. I'm going to run for it!

The distance is so short that Brushtail would not have time to get me even if he saw me. I'll get to the tree, and if Brushtail should come after me I'll run into the hole at the base of the tree. I'll find out about old Brushy before he knows it. And the first thing they know they will be going out of these woods in a hurry. But I must be very, very careful. I should say I must! I must watch every second. My, how those animals in that thicket do growl! It sounds almost as if they were quarreling."

BRUSHTAIL THE FOX FINDS SOME PIECES OF CHEESE

Doctor Rabbit was just ready to run to the tree with the prickly vines around it when he crouched low and sat very still again. He heard somebody coming through the woods. Pretty soon he saw that it was Farmer Roe.

The farmer stopped when he got close to the briar patch and muttered to himself, "Every spring I have to rid these woods of a fox or two. I guess I'll just put out a little bait for them and see how that will work."

As soon as Doctor Rabbit heard Farmer Roe coming through the woods he noticed that everything

in the thicket grew very quiet. I should say it did! There was not the least sound in there—not a single growl. And there Farmer Roe stood within twenty feet of the home of Mr. and Mrs. Brushtail without ever dreaming of it.

Farmer Roe had gloves on, and he held a number of pieces of cheese on one hand. He put several of these pieces of cheese under the fallen tree. Right near the thicket he placed some more cheese, partly under some dead leaves. Then Farmer Roe went around placing the cheese here and there where he thought the fox would be most likely to find it. After a time he put the last piece of cheese under an old log. Then he straightened up and said, "There, now! That ought to fix him, or both of them, if there are two instead of one. I'm glad Yappy has been trained not to eat anything he finds out in the woods," he added, "for this bait would be the end of him, too! And that would never do."

And Farmer Roe walked back through the woods toward his house. After a while the sound of his heavy footsteps died away.

Everything in the thicket was perfectly still. There was not a sound. Doctor Rabbit waited and listened. Then he heard a movement inside the thicket. Presently Mrs. Brushtail came out, sat down, and looked in the direction Farmer Roe had taken. While she sat there Mr. Brushtail came trotting up from somewhere out in the woods. Doctor Rabbit heard the two talking very rapidly and excitedly, but they talked so low he could not understand what they said. He wanted very much to know what they said, but what interested him still more was that he again heard those growls in the thicket. He wondered who it could be, since neither Brushtail nor Mrs. Brushtail was in there now.

Well, after Mr. and Mrs. Brushtail had talked for a while, Brushtail went right up to the old dead log where Farmer Roe had placed some of the cheese. Doctor Rabbit was delighted, for he thought this would

be the end of Brushtail the Fox. And we can't blame Doctor Rabbit or think him cruel, either, for hoping so. You see, Doctor Rabbit, being a doctor, knew at once that Farmer Roe had poisoned that cheese. Yes, sir, he had put poison in it for Mr. Fox. And if Mr. and Mrs. Brushtail should eat just one of those pieces of cheese it would certainly cause their death.

But Doctor Rabbit was certainly surprised at what happened. Brushtail took the piece of cheese carefully in his mouth and carried it to a small hole a little distance away. Then he hunted around until he found every piece of poisoned cheese Farmer Roe had put out. And each time he found a piece of cheese he did just what he did with the first piece: he carried it to that hole and dropped it in. When he had finished he stood and looked down at all those pieces of cheese. Then he began scratching leaves and dirt into the hole. Once in a while he would turn around and look down into the hole and laugh. Then he would turn his back again, and just make the leaves and dirt fly into that hole.

M·W·
Mrs. Brushtail up on the log
smiled ever so broadly at this

Well, he scratched and scratched and scratched until there was not a bit of cheese anywhere to be seen. The hole was full of leaves and dirt, so you never could have found it. Mrs. Brushtail came out and smiled at Brushtail, and both of them looked at Farmer Roe's house and laughed and laughed.

But Doctor Rabbit was not pleased. I should say he wasn't pleased, and he wondered how these two terrible creatures would ever be driven away from the woods. And he wondered more than ever who it was that kept growling in the thicket.

THE GROWLERS COME OUT OF THE THICKET

After Mr. and Mrs. Brushtail had gone back into the thicket, Doctor Rabbit wanted to run home. He surely was uncomfortable so near to Brushtail and Mrs. Brushtail.

"And still," he thought to himself, "since I am here, I'll just stay a little longer and discover all I can." Well, the growling went on for a while in the thicket, and then something happened that certainly surprised Doctor Rabbit. Mrs. Brushtail came out into the open with Farmer Roe's chicken, partly eaten, and she was followed by four little foxes!

Mrs. Brushtail dropped the chicken on the ground for the little foxes, and then she sprang upon a log and just lay there and watched them. Mr. Fox trotted off into the woods again.

"He's probably going after another hen," thought Doctor Rabbit, "or after Stubby Woodchuck or Chatty Red Squirrel or any of us he can catch." And Doctor Rabbit hoped all his little friends would be on the lookout.

While Mrs. Brushtail lay up on the log and looked on proudly, how the little foxes did pull at that dead chicken and growl!

"And so there are the growlers I heard in the thicket!" Doctor Rabbit thought to himself.

Those little foxes might have looked pretty to some people, they were so young and so playful and so funny; but they did not look pretty to Doctor Rabbit. Indeed they did not. They looked like four terrible monsters. Their little eyes snapped like the eyes of terrible little savages, and their tiny teeth, sharp as needles, pulled feathers and sank into the chicken.

It was certainly true that Mrs. Brushtail was teaching her very small children how to eat chicken, and as she lay on the log and watched them, she seemed perfectly satisfied with them.

After the little foxes had growled and pulled at the chicken for a good while, Brushtail was seen coming through the woods with something in his mouth. Then suddenly Doctor Rabbit became almost sick with fear. He thought for a second that Brushtail had caught Stubby Woodchuck, but it proved to be no one but a large and ugly old woodrat that had lately grown so cross and savage that all the little creatures of the Big Green Woods were afraid of him.

Doctor Rabbit was very glad indeed that it was that particular old woodrat, because he had really become dangerous.

Brushtail dropped the woodrat down before the little foxes, and how they did did begin pulling and biting him! Mrs. Brushtail up on the log smiled ever so broadly at this. But it was not a pleasing smile to

Doctor Rabbit, hiding in the briar patch. I should say not! It was a terrible smile.

The next instant Yappy came tearing through the woods, right toward the thicket, and Doctor Rabbit had a moment of hope. But Mrs. Brushtail just uttered one quick, low growl, and every little fox scurried into the thicket. That time Doctor Rabbit had a good view of the inside of the thicket, and he saw what became of the foxes. They went into a hole under some rocks by a large papaw bush. "So that," said Doctor Rabbit to himself, "is where Mr. and Mrs. Brushtail and their little Brushies have their den."

Brushtail did not run into the thicket with Mrs. Brushtail and the little foxes. When he saw Yappy coming toward the thicket he ran right toward the excited dog and then hid behind another thicket. When Yappy came near, Brushtail sprang right out, and away he ran. Yappy bayed loudly, and away he went through the woods after Brushtail. You see now what Brushtail was doing—he was leading Yappy away from that den of little foxes!

JACK RABBIT SPRAINS HIS FOOT

When Mrs. Brushtail and the four little Brushies ran into the hole in the thicket and Father Brushtail ran away through the woods with Yappy in hot pursuit, Doctor Rabbit decided he had better be going. He had discovered a great deal anyway, and now he wanted to find some of his friends and tell them about it.

Doctor Rabbit decided first to go over to the Wide Prairie and see his friend Jack Rabbit. Doctor Rabbit was not much afraid to cross the Wide Prairie, now that Ki-yi Coyote was gone and Brushtail the Fox was busy, for the time at least.

Doctor Rabbit had not been over to see Jack Rabbit's family for a long time, and he was considerably surprised to find Jack Rabbit laid up with a sprained foot. Jack Rabbit said he had sprained his foot the day before while running from some terrible creature that looked somewhat like Ki-yi Coyote and just a little like a dog, but not exactly like either of them.

"He had a large, bushy tail," Jack Rabbit explained, "and his coat was a reddish-brown color. He jumped out from behind some bunch grass and came at me so swiftly that I jumped and turned quickly. And that was how I sprained my foot. He certainly is a fierce and dangerous creature, and I wondered if any of the rest of you had seen him," Jack Rabbit concluded.

"Indeed we have," Doctor Rabbit replied. "I'll bandage your foot now," he continued, "and then we can talk about this new enemy. Mrs. Jack Rabbit," Doctor Rabbit said looking at her over his gold

glasses, "I'll thank you for that bottle of chloroform liniment I left here some time ago."

Mrs. Jack Rabbit brought out the bottle of liniment, and after Doctor Rabbit had bathed Jack Rabbit's foot with some of the liniment he bandaged it quite snugly.

"That feels fine!" said Jack Rabbit, getting right up and standing on all four feet. "I'm so glad you came over, Doctor. That foot feels so good I know I can dance a little jig!"

And Jack Rabbit started to dance a little, but he said, "Ouch!" right away, and everybody laughed, even Jack Rabbit. His foot was not quite well enough for dancing.

Then Doctor Rabbit said, "I told you some of the rest of us had seen that same animal that chased you, Jack Rabbit. I am sure it was the same animal, from the way you describe him. It is Brushtail the Fox. He has just lately moved into the Big Green Woods, and intends to make his home there right along. What makes the matter worse for all of us is that not only

has Mr. Brushtail come, but he has brought his whole family!"

"Oh, dear me!" exclaimed Mrs. Jack Rabbit. "I thought one of them was enough. But all of them—well, that makes it pretty serious for us."

"But it might be worse," said Doctor Rabbit, who always sees the bright side of everything. "You see," he continued, "four of those foxes are so small that they are harmless. Besides, Farmer Roe and his boy are on the lookout for that whole Fox family, and they may get rid of them in a very short time. I thought once," Doctor Rabbit continued, "of letting Yappy run me right to that thicket where the Fox family lives. But if I did, Brushtail or Mrs. Brushtail would surely be right there to lead Yappy away off into the woods. No, if Farmer Roe or his boy doesn't stumble onto their den, I'll have to think up some way myself to get rid of that Fox family. I'll bring my imagination into play," said Doctor Rabbit smilingly, and somewhat proudly, too.

"What does 'magination' mean, sir?" little Billy Rabbit asked wonderingly.

"It means," said Doctor Rabbit, "that you must think and think and think until you think out something quite new."

Then Doctor Rabbit patted all the little rabbits on the head, except Billy Rabbit whom he chucked under the chin, as he bade them all a very pleasant good morning.

"Keep a sharp lookout, and don't worry," Doctor Rabbit said with a smile as he left. "If Farmer Roe does not get rid of that Fox family, I'll think out some way myself."

And he ran like a gray streak back across the Wide Prairie toward the Big Green Woods.

DOCTORING LITTLE THOMAS WOODCHUCK

The next morning quite early Doctor Rabbit received a call to visit a new Woodchuck family that had recently moved into the north part of the Big Green Woods. Doctor Rabbit told Father Woodchuck, who came over after him, that he would be along in a very few moments. Then he shut the door and began to get ready.

Doctor Rabbit always dressed with especial care when he was called to a new family. He got out his silk hat and brushed it carefully. He curled his mustache until it looked just right. Then he put on his finest pair of gold glasses, which he kept laid away for

such occasions. He looked very handsome, I can tell you, in his new blue coat, his bright red trousers, and his finest pair of soft white shoes. He surely did.

Doctor Rabbit was ready. He picked up his best medicine case, filled with the finest of medicines, and started toward the home of the new family of Woodchucks.

When Doctor Rabbit reached the place he found it was one of the youngsters who was sick. In fact, it was Thomas Woodchuck, the pet of the family. His name was not just Tommy; it was Thomas, and everybody called him that. Doctor Rabbit sat down by the bed and said, "Let me see your tongue, Thomas." You see, Doctor Rabbit had asked what Thomas' name was. He always did this. It helped the children not to feel afraid of him.

Little Thomas Woodchuck put out his tongue. "I see! I see! That will do, Thomas," said Doctor Rabbit cheerfully. "Your tongue is badly coated. Your pulse is pretty rapid, too."

Then Doctor Rabbit thumped all around over little Thomas Woodchuck, just as the men doctors thump around over little boys and girls when they are sick. Only Doctor Rabbit did not have to thump so long. He could always find out in a hurry what was the trouble.

Doctor Rabbit looked very wisely over his fine gold glasses at all the rest of the family who were standing about and said, "Mr. and Mrs. Woodchuck, your son has some stomach trouble from eating too many of those raw peanuts Farmer Roe has stored in his cob house!"

Well, sir, that was exactly the truth.

They all wondered how Doctor Rabbit knew what Thomas had eaten. But Doctor Rabbit just had his eyes open, and put two and two together. He knew the peanuts were in Farmer Roe's cob house because he had taken a few of them himself now and then. And then he saw a lot of peanut hulls right under the cover of the bed where little Thomas Woodchuck lay.

"Thomas," said Doctor Rabbit, laughing, "you must not eat so many of those peanuts. Why, there will be none left for me!"

Then little Thomas Woodchuck and the whole family laughed, and they all felt better. But Doctor Rabbit gave Thomas three big black pills and told him to swallow them all at once. Thomas did, and they were so bitter he tried to spit them out after he had swallowed them, but he could not do it, of course, and so they went right to work curing him.

"You will be quite well tomorrow, Thomas," Doctor Rabbit said cheerfully, and the whole Woodchuck family breathed easier.

Then Mrs. Woodchuck said, "Doctor, I hear two terrible foxes have come into our woods."

Doctor Rabbit frowned at Mrs. Woodchuck to make her keep still about the foxes near Thomas, for fear he might be frightened. He was always very careful about this when visiting his patients. "Well, I must be going. Goodbye, Thomas," Doctor Rabbit said, just as if he had not heard Mrs. Woodchuck.

Then when he was out in the kitchen he whispered very low to Father and Mother Woodchuck: "Yes, two terrible foxes have come into the Big Green Woods, but I did not want Thomas to hear. But don't you worry, Mrs. Woodchuck," Doctor Rabbit went on, because he saw how troubled she looked, "don't you worry a bit, I thought of a scheme to get rid of Ki-yi Coyote and also of Tom Wildcat, and if Farmer Roe does not get rid of Mr. and Mrs. Brushtail, I will. Good morning!" And Doctor Rabbit slipped out of the door and was gone.

LISTENING TO THE BRUSHTAILS

It was a mighty good thing that Doctor Rabbit kept a sharp lookout on his way home from the Woodchuck house. If he had not been watching he might have run right into Mr. and Mrs. Brushtail, who stood talking behind a large elm tree.

Doctor Rabbit heard them and saw them at the same time. He was so close that he was afraid even to run. So he crept noiselessly under a dense leafy thicket near at hand. Doctor Rabbit was pretty badly scared, because there was not a briar patch anywhere near.

So he did the safest thing. He crouched down on the ground, kept still, and listened.

Mr. and Mrs. Brushtail, talking behind the tree, never dreamed, of course, that there was anybody close by listening. They talked pretty softly, but Doctor Rabbit was so near that he could hear every word they said. Brushtail was talking. "Yes," he said, "that dog has a very sharp nose, and he is bound to find our den sooner or later. So I think, Mrs. Fox, we had better move you and the children clear out of these woods. I'll take you to a new den in the woods away off up the river. There is not much in the way of rabbits and woodchucks and chickens up there, but I'll keep on spending most of my time down here. You see, I can catch the rabbits and woodchucks and chickens, and carry them up to you."

"Very well, dear," said Mrs. Brushtail, "I think that is an excellent plan. When shall we move?"

"This very day," Brushtail said. "We'll get the young foxes right away and start off with them. The sooner we get them out of here, the better it will be for all of us."

Mr. and Mrs. Brushtail trotted off toward the thicket in which they had their den. Doctor Rabbit was still a little scared, but he believed he would follow at a distance and see for himself whether Mr. and Mrs. Brushtail actually did move the little foxes.

Mr. and Mrs. Brushtail went into the thicket, and in a very short time came out again. And sure enough, each of them carried a little fox by the back of its neck.

They walked across the shallow Murmuring Brook and laid the two little Brushies down on the other side in a thicket. Then they came back and carried the other two little Brushies over in the same way.

As they went past him this last time Doctor Rabbit heard Brushtail say to Mrs. Brushtail, "You can just wait with them in the thicket on the other side of Murmuring Brook until I carry two of them up the river to the new den. When I come back we can carry the other two."

You see, foxes can carry their baby Foxes by the back of the neck and not hurt them at all.

Well, Doctor Rabbit was glad and hungry at the same time. He now hurried right over to the nice, tender blue grass under the big sycamore tree. There he found Chatty Red Squirrel, Cheepy Chipmunk, and quite a number of his other friends, who all wanted to know at once if Doctor Rabbit had found out anything more about Mr. Fox. Doctor Rabbit did know a great deal, as you know, and he told his friends he would tell them. But he added that he was so hungry he would have to eat while he talked. Doctor Rabbit is a great person to eat grass, anyway.

"It seems as though I never can get enough!" he said every now and then.

DOCTOR RABBIT TELLS SOME GOOD NEWS

Chatty Red Squirrel, Cheepy Chipmunk, and all the rest of Doctor Rabbit's friends who were gathered under the big sycamore tree were certainly very happy when Doctor Rabbit told them that Mrs. Brushtail and all the little Brushies were leaving the Big Green Woods for good.

"As the matter stands now," Doctor Rabbit said, "we've nobody but Brushtail to look out for. But he's surely enough! I should say he is! And if Farmer Roe does not get him soon, I'm going to keep right on thinking of some plan to get him out of here. We can't scare him as we did Tom Wildcat. Brushtail is too

cunning for that. He'd just laugh at us if we painted signs and put them up on our doors, no matter what was painted on the signs. I heard Brushtail tell Mrs. Brushtail that he would not live in that thicket any more. He said he would get himself a new den not far off and probably a little nearer to the Murmuring Brook. So you see we could not lead Yappy to Brushtail now if we wanted to. And I am afraid Yappy will be a good while in finding Brushtail's new den. I may find it," Doctor Rabbit continued, "but I'd never risk trying to lead Yappy to it, and Jack Rabbit has a sprained foot, so he can't. But from the way he talked to me, I don't think he'd be willing to try it even if his foot weren't sprained."

"Possibly," suggested Chatty Red Squirrel, "Brushtail will not have a fallen tree near his new den, nor any other way of making Yappy lose the trail. And possibly Yappy will smell along old Brushtail's trail and find him right in his den."

"Don't you ever think Brushtail will be foolish enough to walk straight along the ground to his den,"

said Doctor Rabbit. "He's far too wise for that, no matter where his den is. No, sir, he will make big jumps sidewise and walk back on his trail and walk in big circles, and better still, walk for a distance in the Murmuring Brook. Ah! he'll do a whole lot of things before he goes into his den. Of course," Doctor Rabbit said softly, "it is possible Farmer Roe may trap old Brushtail. I saw him working with a trap only this morning."

A FOOLISH OLD HEN

Several days after Doctor Rabbit had talked to his friends under the big sycamore tree he was hopping along near the edge of the Big Green Woods when he saw Brushtail the Fox hiding behind a tree and looking toward Farmer Roe's house.

Doctor Rabbit crept under a big brush pile and looked in the same direction. What do you suppose Brushtail was watching? Well, he was looking at a big Plymouth Rock hen coming across the field right toward the place where he lay hidden.

Now, if Doctor Rabbit had had something better than a brush pile to hide under, he might have made some sort of noise and warned the hen. But if he had

made the least sound, Brushtail would have come diving under that brush pile in a second, for he isn't afraid of brush piles as he is of briar patches.

Pretty soon the hen reached the woods. She stretched up her neck and looked around, but not seeing anything she started into the woods for some crickets. She had gone only a few steps when Brushtail the Fox bounded out, seized her by the neck, and ran off through the Big Green Woods.

Doctor Rabbit followed along behind, going hoppity, hoppity, hoppity, and presently he saw Brushtail splashing along in the Murmuring Brook. He was trotting along in the brook for a distance, for, you see, a hound cannot smell a fox's tracks in the water; and so Yappy could not track him.

Doctor Rabbit stopped and looked.

He saw Brushtail finally cross to the other side of the Murmuring Brook. Brushtail then turned and looked back to see if anybody was following him. He did not see anyone, so, still holding the dead hen in his mouth, he trotted out of sight among the trees.

Of course Doctor Rabbit knew what Brushtail was going to do. He was going to take that hen up the river to Mrs. Brushtail and the little Brushies.

When Brushtail had passed out of sight, Doctor Rabbit did not go home at once. No, he sat down to think. He was trying to think out a way to drive old Brushtail out of the Big Green Woods. He sat there and thought ever and ever so long. Sometimes he thought so hard he scratched his head without knowing it. At other times he curled his mustache.

So he thought and thought, but after a long time he said he would have to give it up for this time. He was not discouraged, for he could tell from the various things he had thought of that something would turn up after a while to help him work out a plan that would get rid of Brushtail the Fox. That was one fine thing about Doctor Rabbit—he would not give up. He kept right on trying.

Well, for the next two days Doctor Rabbit was busy doctoring the little Chipmunk children. They had got into Farmer Roe's apple orchard and had eaten a

Brushtail the Fox seized her by the neck

lot of green apples, in spite of the fact that Mother Chipmunk had told Jimmy Chipmunk, her oldest, that he and the rest of the children should not eat green apples.

DOCTOR RABBIT LAYS A TRAP

The day after Doctor Rabbit cured the little Chipmunk children, he thought of a new plan for catching Brushtail the Fox, and he decided to try it at once.

Doctor Rabbit knew very well that somehow he must drive Brushtail out of the Big Green Woods. None of the little creatures would be safe for a moment until this was done. Yes, cruel, sly old Brushtail must be driven away, and everything depended on our clever Doctor Rabbit.

As Doctor Rabbit started hopping along through the woods he said quietly to himself, "Of course this scheme I have in mind may not work. But it is worth trying anyway. I won't tell any of my friends about it, and then if I don't catch Brushtail they won't be disappointed. But if I do catch him!"

Right here Doctor Rabbit stopped and laughed and laughed. "My," he continued, "if I do catch him, won't Stubby Woodchuck and Cheepy Chipmunk and all the others be surprised! Well, I should say they will be surprised!"

And Doctor Rabbit went hopping along, chuckling to himself and feeling mighty fine. He is always happy when he has thought of a plan to get rid of some big, cruel animal.

Doctor Rabbit kept going until he came to a part of the Big Green Woods where the Murmuring Brook was widest and deepest. He knew just what he was looking for, too. You see, Farmer Roe's boy had been setting his fishing lines here every night. Each morning he would pull his lines out of the water, take

the fish off, and then leave one or two of the lines lying on the bank until evening.

Doctor Rabbit wanted one of these fishing lines, and when he reached the place, sure enough, there was a long, stout fishing line lying right on the ground. There were some hooks on the end of the line, but Doctor Rabbit did not want these, so with his sharp teeth he cut them off. Then he picked up the line and took it some distance away to a big thicket. Here Doctor Rabbit began making a loop in one end of that fishing line and chuckling as he worked.

Well, in just a little while he had that loop all fixed. Then he spread out the loop, which was made so it would slip, on a nice patch of open ground near the thicket. The other end of the line he hid in the thicket. Then he went over to the edge of the Murmuring Brook. He moved along the edge of the brook and watched ever so carefully. Now what do you suppose Doctor Rabbit was looking for this time? Well, sir, he was looking for a live fish. He saw several and made a grab for them, but they all got away. But Doctor

Rabbit is very patient, and presently he seized a nice one and carried it, wiggling in his mouth, back to the loop he had made in that line. He dropped the small fish in the center of the loop. The fish didn't jump much now; it only wiggled and flapped its tail a little, and that was just what Doctor Rabbit wanted it to do.

He ran into the thicket where the other end of the line was and waited for Brushtail the Fox to come along.

As Doctor Rabbit waited and listened he heard footsteps approaching. He peeped out to see who it was. It wasn't Brushtail at all; it was Ray Coon. And my, you should have seen Mr. Coon run for that fish when he saw it!

"Hurrah!" Ray Coon shouted. "Some one has lost a fish. Here's my breakfast right here!"

And he was just about to pounce upon the fish when he was almost scared out of his wits by Doctor Rabbit calling out, "Boo! Let that fish alone, Neighbor!

I put it there to catch Brushtail the Fox! Come here, into the thicket."

And so Ray Coon, looking rather foolish, went into the thicket where Doctor Rabbit was hiding.

"Keep right still!" Doctor Rabbit whispered to his friend. "I was going to try to catch old Brushtail all by myself," he continued, "but now that you have happened along you'd better stay, for I may need some help."

"How are you going to catch him, Doctor Rabbit?" Ray Coon asked. And Doctor Rabbit just pointed one foot out toward the loop and the squirming fish. Then Ray Coon understood, and how he did chuckle! He was just as much amused as was Doctor Rabbit and they both laughed and laughed, but they had to be very quiet, of course, because at any minute Brushtail might come along.

Suddenly Doctor Rabbit peeked out and whispered, "Sh! sh! Keep as still as anything! There comes old Brushy now. And yes, he's coming this way!"

BRUSHTAIL THE FOX IS ALMOST CAUGHT

Doctor Rabbit and Ray Coon kept perfectly quiet in the thicket and watched Brushtail the Fox as he came creeping along. When he saw the fish lying in that loop, my, how wide Brushtail's eyes did open! The fish jumped and squirmed just enough to make Brushtail want it very badly. He was so delighted that he stood up on his hind legs and danced toward the fish.

"Ha! ha!" he laughed. "It was probably old Bald Eagle who flew over the woods and dropped his fish! Ha! ha! ha! That's luck for me—a fine fish for

breakfast. And I did not have to get my feet wet to catch it." Then Brushtail began to sing:

"Great flying Bald Eagle caught a fish,
And flew away to eat him;
But down it fell through green treetops,
And Brushy Fox will cheat him!"

Brushtail finished his song and jumped for the fish. He jumped, of course, right into that loop Doctor Rabbit had made in the stout fishing cord. Well, sir, just as soon as Brushtail's feet touched the ground inside that loop, Doctor Rabbit and Ray Coon jerked the line as quickly and as firmly as they could. The loop slipped up and caught Brushtail around the body.

My, but he was surprised and scared! I should say he was! He forgot the fish instantly, and he yelled ever so loud, "Let me go," although he did not know, of course, just what it was that had caught him.

The way he yelled and started pulling to get away was so funny that Doctor Rabbit and Ray Coon laughed until they could scarcely hold the line.

They wrapped the line around their paws and held on as hard as ever they could. And my, how Brushtail did dig his claws into the ground and pull!

When he found he couldn't free himself he was more frightened than ever and shouted (because, you see, he could not see what held him), "You let go of me, you old ghost, or goblin man! You let go of me or I'll claw you to pieces! Let go of me or I'll come back there and pull all your hair out, and I'll throw you in the briars so far you'll never get out and they will stick you forever!"

And all the time Brushtail was talking this he was digging his claws into the ground and pulling with all his might.

Doctor Rabbit could not have held him alone, but Ray Coon is pretty plump and stout, and he helped a great deal. But Brushtail pulled so hard

that he pulled them right out of the thicket before they knew it!

Doctor Rabbit was so anxious to hold Brushtail that he cried right out, "Hold him, Ray Coon! Hold on to him! Hold on to him!"

Then Doctor Rabbit saw his mistake, for when Brushtail the Fox heard that voice he stopped pulling and turned around quickly. When he turned toward them, Ray Coon seized the fish, and he and Doctor Rabbit ran for their lives. And Brushtail was close behind them.

Doctor Rabbit skipped away as easily as could be, and Ray Coon, with the fish in his mouth, started up a tree. Brushtail ran for Ray Coon and gave a big spring for him. He almost got him, too, for he bit him on the hind foot. But Ray Coon managed to get up on a limb just out of reach. Brushtail was so angry at losing the fish and being completely fooled that he jumped several times as high as he could, but he could not jump quite high enough. So Ray Coon just sat there and ate that fish right before Brushtail's eyes.

"This is an extra good fish," Ray Coon called down, as he gobbled it up. "It's extra good, Brushy. But you didn't want it anyway, did you? Ha! ha! ha!"

Then old Brushtail was angrier than before. He pulled the loop off of his body with his teeth and snarled, "All right for this time—you and that big fat rabbit fooled me. He's pretty clever, but he'll not fool me again. And the next time I'll get both of you. I'll eat rabbit and coon both at one meal.

In about three days I'll get both of you!" And with an angry growl old Brushtail the Fox went off into the woods.

After a while Doctor Rabbit ventured out of his hiding place and hopped over to the tree which Ray Coon had climbed.

"Brushtail has gone off toward the Murmuring Brook," Doctor Rabbit said. "Come on down and let me doctor your foot where he bit you. I see it's bleeding a little."

Ray Coon came right down and laughed as he said, "My foot isn't hurt much, Doctor, and it will soon be well if you put some of your yellow salve on it."

"Of course it will," Doctor Rabbit agreed, as he took some salve from his medicine case.

He bandaged Ray's foot in a few minutes. But all the time that he was bandaging it, he kept a sharp lookout for Brushtail.

"He's very sly," Doctor Rabbit said, "and I am certain that right this minute he is planning some scheme to catch us or some of our friends."

"That's so," Ray Coon replied, looking at the bushes around him somewhat nervously. "I do wish," he continued, "that we could think of some plan to get rid of him for good. Then we could live happily and have our fun as we used to do."

"Don't you worry, Neighbor Coon," Doctor Rabbit chuckled as he picked up his medicine case and looked at Ray Coon over his big glasses. "Don't you worry," he repeated, "I'll have a plan all in good time,

and right now I'm going in the direction he went, to see what he is up to!"

Ray Coon seemed a little nervous again as he said, "Well, do be careful, whatever you do, Doctor, because he looked terribly cruel, you remember."

"Ha! ha! ha!" jolly Doctor Rabbit laughed as he started away, waving a paw at Ray Coon, "I'll take care of myself—never fear. And I'll take care of old Brushy Fox, too! Ha! ha! ha! Yes, I'll see what he's doing now. Perhaps I shall catch him right away." And Doctor Rabbit slipped away in the direction in which Brushtail had gone.

AN EXCITING CHASE

You remember that Doctor Rabbit started out to find Brushtail the Fox and watch him. Well, it was not long before Brushtail was found, and it certainly was exciting for Doctor Rabbit to watch what happened. This is the way it happened. It was Yappy who found Brushtail. Doctor Rabbit was hopping along, looking for Brushtail, when Yappy came tearing through the woods and almost ran into Brushtail.

You see, Brushtail saw Yappy coming, but he thought Yappy would pass by because he had not as yet smelled the trail. These things Brushtail always knows. But Yappy passed so close he smelled fox, and then Brushtail certainly did have to jump and run.

Doctor Rabbit just sprang up on the trunk of a fallen tree to watch the race. All of a sudden he saw Farmer Roe and his boy running toward Yappy, and with them was another big dog which joined in the chase after Brushtail.

"It's a fox! a fox! It's that old fox!" shouted Farmer Roe's boy. "Catch him, Yappy! Catch him! catch him!" The second big hound turned Brushtail back so that he almost ran into Farmer Roe before he saw him. Farmer Roe threw a stick at Brushtail but missed him.

"Catch him, Yappy, catch him!" shouted Farmer Roe. "He'll steal all my hens if you don't."

Away they all ran after Brushtail the Fox—Farmer Roe and his boy yelling, and both hounds barking.

"My!" exclaimed Doctor Rabbit as he sat on the fallen tree, "I certainly do hope they'll catch him!"

And just at that moment it looked as if they would catch Brushtail. He was in such a great hurry that in trying to jump across a wide ditch in the woods he fell right into it. And Yappy was almost upon him.

"Yappy's got him!" shouted Farmer Roe's boy. "Yappy's got him!"

But Brushtail was not to be caught so easily. He sprang out of that hole in a flash, and away he ran like the wind.

As Doctor Rabbit watched, Brushtail ran out of sight in the woods, and the barking of the hounds and the voices of Farmer Roe and his boy sounded farther and farther away. Doctor Rabbit sat and waited, for he thought they might turn Brushtail back and run him past the fallen tree. But after a while they seemed farther away than ever, and he could just barely hear Yappy barking on the trail. Doctor Rabbit just sat still and waited. He knew that Brushtail the Fox was one of the slyest creatures in the woods, and he was pretty sure now that he would get away for this time at least. "I should not be surprised if he came sneaking back right around here. And still," Doctor Rabbit said hopefully, "Yappy may get him. I'll just wait for a time and see what does happen."

Several times as Doctor Rabbit sat there he heard a noise in the bushes near by and each time he looked quickly in that direction. But it must have been the wind blowing the leaves, for he did not see anything.

Once, however, Doctor Rabbit was really startled. A big woodrat ran through some dead leaves and made a good deal of noise. He stopped and looked at Doctor Rabbit and asked, "Are you waiting for some one?"

"Yes," Doctor Rabbit replied, "I'm waiting for Brushtail the Fox; I'm expecting him any time."

"Brushtail the Fox!" exclaimed the Woodrat. "Well, I'm not going to wait for him!" And he hurried away as fast as he could.

Then Doctor Rabbit heard another noise. Some creature was creeping through the bushes not far off. He was coming nearer, too.

THE BIG GRAY GOOSE GETS AWAY

Doctor Rabbit sat on the trunk of the fallen tree and never moved a muscle as he listened to the animal creeping through the thicket. Every now and then it would stop, and there was not a sound; then it would move again, and all the time it kept coming nearer and nearer.

Doctor Rabbit has a way of twitching his nose most of the time, but as he sat there he did not even move his nose. No, sir! He was as still as the tree trunk on which he sat. He kept his eyes right on the

place from which the sounds of the creeping animal came.

And then his heart gave a thump and beat very fast—for out of the thicket came old Brushtail himself! He looked all about carefully, and then sat down panting, tired out from his long run.

But after he was somewhat rested, Brushtail got up and grinned. He looked out in the woods in the direction where Yappy and the other hound were still running and barking.

"Ha! ha! ha!" Brushtail chuckled softly. "They've lost my trail. I knew they would when I walked down the Murmuring Brook. Well," he continued, "I'll just look around a bit for something to eat. Perhaps I can find that big fat rabbit."

It happened that Brushtail started right for the fallen tree where Doctor Rabbit sat, and Doctor Rabbit was just about to spring off and run when something else happened. Farmer Roe's big gray goose came near. She was eating some tender green grass

blades and never dreamed that a fox was near. But Brushtail saw her and started creeping toward her.

Doctor Rabbit could not bear to see that big gray goose gobbled up, so he shouted as loud as he could, "Look out, Gray Goose! Brushtail the Fox is going to get you! He's coming! He's coming!"

Now, as you may know, a tame goose cannot fly very far, but many of them can fly a short distance, and fly fairly high too. The gray goose was terribly frightened, and instantly began flapping her great wings. She flew just high enough in the air so that Brushtail missed him when he sprang. If the Murmuring Brook had not been near, that gray goose would surely have been caught, because, as I have said, she cannot fly very far; but as it was she managed to fly across the brook. Then she came to the ground again and ran screaming and flapping her wings toward Farmer Roe's. She got out of the woods in a few moments and Brushtail the Fox did not catch her.

Now when Doctor Rabbit shouted, Brushtail turned quickly and saw him, but knowing that he could

not catch both of them, he sprang for the gray goose. But Brushtail did not swim across Murmuring Brook. He knew it would take him too long, and he saw that he could not catch the gray goose after all. So he turned from the edge of the brook and started back after Doctor Rabbit.

My, but Brushtail was angry at Doctor Rabbit!

"It was that big fat rabbit that made me miss my dinner!" snarled Brushtail.

"I saw him sitting on that fallen tree. It was he who warned that silly goose!"

And Brushtail ran swiftly to the fallen tree, and darted quickly all around it. He sprang into the near-by thickets and charged under some small brush piles. In fact, he raced around and hunted in every spot where he thought Doctor Rabbit might be hiding, and all the time he kept up an angry growl.

"I'll get him; I'll get him," Brushtail kept snarling. "I'll get that big fat rabbit if it takes me a week!"

BRUSHTAIL THE FOX FINDS THE TRAPS

A few days after Doctor Rabbit had helped Farmer Roe's big gray goose to escape from Brushtail the Fox, Doctor Rabbit saw something that interested him greatly. Farmer Roe was working at something out in the woods. There was a briar patch near by, so Doctor Rabbit crept into this and watched.

Yes, sir! Farmer Roe was actually setting a trap, or rather, he was setting four traps. And he was surely arranging things so that if Brushtail could ever be fooled at all he could be fooled here, or so it seemed, at least. Farmer Roe had chosen a low place in the woods, full of the finest white sand. He staked

the traps and set them in the sand, and covered them all over with sand so that they could not be seen. Then he dragged an old cow's head right in the center of the four traps.

Now, you see, it looked just as if some animal had been eating the cow's head and had left it right in that nice fine white sand. And if Mr. Fox should happen along, it looked as if he might try to go right up to that head. Then he would be sure to step into one of those traps!

Well, all the rest of that day and most of the night Doctor Rabbit watched those traps and that cow's head. At last, far along in the night, he heard a noise in the bushes close by. The moon shone very brightly through the trees, and on that patch of white sand and the cow's head. A dark form came slipping out of the shadows and kept coming nearer. Pretty soon Doctor Rabbit saw who it was. It was Brushtail the Fox.

Brushtail sniffed toward the cow's head and said, "Well, well, fresh beef! This is pretty fine!" And he

began walking around and around that cow's head. But he seemed a little suspicious, for he did not walk right up to the head. Still, he kept getting closer and closer. And then, all of a sudden, he stumbled over something.

"Hello! What's this!" Brushtail exclaimed. He dug around a little in the sand, then said, "Oho, I see! It's a stake I stumbled over, and here is a chain and—why sure enough! There's a trap fastened to the chain. Ha! ha! ha! No beef to-night, thank you! I'll just wait. Perhaps some foolish animal will drag that head away and hide it. Then I'll just help myself. Sooner or later I'll get that head!" And Brushtail trotted away.

But he did not go far until he stopped and sniffed again in the direction of the cow's head.

"My!" exclaimed Brushtail, "That meat certainly does smell good, so good that I am almost tempted to go back and try to get it. But I'm afraid. I'll just wait as I said. And I'll get that cow's head as sure as anything."

It was a queer procession!

And laughing to himself because he believed he was so clever, Brushtail stole softly away into the woods.

Well, Brushtail is clever, but some one else was just a bit cleverer, and that was Doctor Rabbit.

GETTING TOGETHER

Of course Doctor Rabbit was greatly disappointed when Brushtail the Fox discovered that there was a trap set in the sand, because he had thought surely Brushtail would be caught. Then, after Brushtail had gone away, Doctor Rabbit suddenly thought of something. Yes, sir! It came to him in an instant—a plan to get rid of Brushtail the Fox! And the plan was suggested to Doctor Rabbit by Brushtail's remark, "Perhaps some foolish animal will drag that head away and hide it. Then I'll just help myself."

Well, as soon as it was daylight, Doctor Rabbit hurried right over to Jack Rabbit's, told him what his plan was, and brought Jack Rabbit back with him.

Then Doctor Rabbit hurried around through the Big Green Woods telling his friends. He told Stubby Woodchuck, Cheepy Chipmunk, Chatty Red Squirrel, Frisky Grey Squirrel, Robin-the-Red, O. Possum, busy Blue Jay, Jim Crow, and quite a number of others. He asked them all to come about the middle of the forenoon to the place where Farmer Roe had placed the cow's head, as he would need every one of them at about that time.

Immediately Doctor Rabbit and Jack Rabbit hurried away toward Farmer Roe's back lot. They squeezed under a board fence and began looking for something.

"Here it is!" Doctor Rabbit said, picking up a stout piece of rope that had been part of a clothes-line.

"I knew it was in here somewhere," Jack Rabbit said, "for I saw it just yesterday."

"Now," said Doctor Rabbit, "let's go back to the woods and find that slim hickory tree that has a grapevine hanging from the top."

They ran into the woods, and after a little search found the hickory. They hid the rope they had found and hurried over to the cow's head in the sand. There they found all the other little creatures. After a great deal of very careful work, Doctor Rabbit, Jack Rabbit, and O. Possum managed to get the cow's head outside the circle of traps. Then every one of Doctor Rabbit's friends helped to pull and push the cow's head. It was a queer procession!

After quite a while they succeeded in pushing and pulling the cow's head to the slim hickory tree. Doctor Rabbit told them now to push it into a near-by thicket, and they did.

Fat O. Possum exclaimed, "Whew, I'm tired. Now let's eat the head!"

Everybody but O. Possum laughed at that, and Doctor Rabbit said, "No, Brother Possum, not just yet, but you are helping wonderfully, and tomorrow morning I think you can have this head all to yourself. I think we'll be rid of Brushtail the Fox by that time."

Doctor Rabbit now grabbed hold of the grapevine that hung from the top of the hickory, and he and all his friends pulled and pulled until they bent the top of the hickory down to the thicket. Then, while his friends held the tree-top down, Doctor Rabbit made a snare or loop of the rope he had found, and arranged it in the thicket so that if Brushtail got to the cow's head he would have to step through the snare, or slip noose. Finally, Doctor Rabbit tied the tree rather loosely to a small twig of the thicket and told his friends to step back carefully, because the least thing would make the tree fly up as it was before and take that snare with it.

BRUSHTAIL THE FOX DISCOVERS THE COW'S HEAD

Doctor Rabbit and all his friends stood back and watched to see whether the tree would fly back, but it did not. It held as firm and quiet as could be.

"Now," said Doctor Rabbit, "old Brushy will come back to where that head was, and, seeing it gone, he will naturally think that O. Possum or somebody has dragged it away. So Brushtail will smell along the ground where we have dragged the head, and he will finally find it right here. I have hidden the noose in the thicket so that Mister Fox will not notice it, and he'll walk right in to get that head. In doing so, he'll put

his head through that noose and pull on it, trying to get to the head.

Well, when Mr. Brushtail pulls, he'll break that slender twig that holds the tree down, because that twig is about ready to break as it is. Then we'll see what'll happen!"

"Let's hurry away now," Doctor Rabbit added. "If foxy Brushtail happened to see all of us here at once he might become suspicious. I'll come back soon and watch, and if anything happens I'll let all of you know at once."

So away went Stubby Woodchuck and O. Possum and all the others, talking quietly yet excitedly, and now and then laughing a little. They said they hoped Brushtail would come soon, and they also said that something just told them away down deep in their hearts that Brushtail was surely going to be caught this time. And all that day they could scarcely eat, they were so eager to know whether Brushtail would get caught in that noose in the thicket.

Doctor Rabbit hid not far from the cow's head and waited all day. Then he went to supper and came quickly back. Pretty soon night came, and the big round moon came up. Along about midnight Doctor Rabbit heard a sound. Pit-a-pat! pit-a-pat! pit-a-pat! Some one was coming along slowly through the woods! Then, as the form came nearer, Doctor Rabbit saw Brushtail the Fox trotting along with his sharp nose to the ground, smelling the trail where that cow's head had been dragged.

Well, sir, Brushtail went right up to the thicket where the noose was. Then he laughed and laughed and laughed.

"Well, well, well!" said Brushtail. "I guess I'm just a little too smart for anybody around these woods. Ha! ha! ha! It's just as I thought. That silly old fat possum or somebody has been foolish enough to walk right in among those traps that Farmer Roe set and drag that head up here. Well, I'll just go on into this thicket and bring that head out and take charge of it myself.

There's enough meat to last me several days." And Brushtail started into the thicket.

WHAT HAPPENED TO BRUSHTAIL THE FOX

When Brushtail the Fox started into the thicket to get the cow's head he never dreamed, of course, that there was anything there to catch him. So he plunged right into the thicket. Swish! Up went that tall, slim hickory tree, and Brushtail with it! You never heard such a yell as Brushtail gave. He yelled so loudly that all the little creatures of the Big Green Woods were awakened, and Doctor Rabbit did not have to call them. They all came running toward the place where the snare had been set.

Even Jack Rabbit, away out in the Wide Prairie, heard Brushtail yell, and here came Jack Rabbit running as fast as he could.

In a little time all the little creatures of the Big Green Woods were there. Now, you see, Brushtail had put his front legs through that noose, so that it held him around the body just behind his fore legs. The rope did not hurt him much, although it pulled considerably. So he dangled up there and howled, while all the little creatures below shouted and danced for joy.

Of course, when Brushtail saw all the little creatures come so quickly, he knew a trick had been played upon him, but he was too badly scared to be angry. I should say he was! He was about scared out of his wits when that tree jerked him up into the air, and he was about as badly scared now as ever, because he could not see how he was ever going to get down from there.

"Let me down! Let me down! Let me down!" Brushtail shouted, clawing wildly at the air.

"Oh yes!" said Doctor Rabbit. "I suppose we'll let you down, foxy Brushy. I suppose we know what you would do to us mighty quick if you caught us. Yes, it's likely we'll let you down. Ha! ha! ha!" And Doctor Rabbit and all his friends danced around under the tree and laughed and laughed.

"I'll go out of these woods and never, never, never come back if you'll just let me down!" Brushtail promised; and he really meant it. This was just what Doctor Rabbit was waiting to hear Brushtail say.

But Doctor Rabbit said, "We'll go over to my house for a little while and talk the matter over."

And, with Brushtail begging them to come back and let him down, they all hurried over to Doctor Rabbit's house in the big tree. When they were inside Doctor Rabbit seated them all in his best chairs.

Then he stood up and said, "My friends, I just wanted to have you all come over here and stay until morning. The fact is, that while Brushtail is pretty badly scared, he is not hurt much yet, and we must hurt him, at least a little, or he may forget his promise and come

back to our woods. By morning, however, I think he will have learned a lesson he never will forget, and I think he'll keep out."

So they talked and had a good time at Doctor Rabbit's until morning. It was just daylight when they went back to the slim hickory. Brushtail was still hanging there, and when he saw them how he did yell to be let down!

"Very well, Brother Brushy," Doctor Rabbit said, "we'll let you down, and if you ever come back into our woods again—"

"Oh," yelled Brushtail before Doctor Rabbit could say another word, "I'll never, never, never come back if I can get down. I'd rather live on crickets and bugs all my life than to take chances." But Brushtail did not say any more, because he wanted to get down right away.

"O. Possum," said Doctor Rabbit, "if you'll go up and gnaw that rope in two so that old Brushtail can drop to the ground, you may have that cow's head all for yourself."

"I'll do that," O. Possum said, and he began climbing the tree. Presently O. Possum was above Brushtail, and began gnawing the rope.

"Oh, dear me!" shouted Brushtail after O. Possum had gnawed for a time. "It's an awfully long way to the ground, I'm afraid!"

And then O. Possum got the rope gnawed right in two. Plunk! Brushtail struck the ground. Well, sir, he got right up and started to run. He was so stiff he could not run well at first, but the farther he went the faster he ran. After he got across the Murmuring Brook he went away through the woods on the other side like a streak. I don't know of anything that could have scared Brushtail and made him stay scared as that snare did.

Brushtail the Fox never came around the Big Green Woods after that. Doctor Rabbit and his friends were certainly glad and happy.

THE END

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